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Multinational Programming and Operational Centre (ECA/MULPOC) for Eastern and Southern African States

Seventh Meeting of the MULPOC Committee of Officials

5-9 March 1984

LC/NAIROBI

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REFORMULATION OF BUILDING CODES AND REGULATIONS

Progress report on the reformulation of building codes and regulations

1. Building codes and regulations constitute the legal and administrative framework in every country for ensuring that buildings and constructions take place fully in accordance with the requirements of safety, sanitation, health and local environment and town/community planning criteria. They are an important factor in the development of human settlements. They have to be responsibe to local needs and amenable to changes and improvement for this purpose. Unfortunately, the codes and regulations which are prevailing in many African countries at present do not fully meet the needs of human settlements development as they had been adapted from foreign codes and regulations which had been designed to meet the building needs of European countries many years ago. They have become an anachronism in the current context of the needs of the African region. In particular, they are unhelpful to the adoption of local building services, technologies and building materials, contribute to the high costs of construction and excessive reliance on imported materials and building services, and negatively to the rapid development of indigenous building materials and construction industries.

2. African governments have therefore assigned priority to the task of reformulating the existing codes and regulations. This task is one of the major components of the building materials and construction industries development programme being executed by the Economic Commission for Africa. On the basis of a study carried out in eight countries 1/ a document 2/ was submitted by ECA to the sixth meeting of the Council of Ministers of MULPOC (held at Mbabane, Swaziland from 14-16 February 1983) outlining some proposals for the reformualtion. The proposals included a recommendation that a model of the desirable codes and regulations may be designed and introduced in one of the countries and after an evaluation of the experiences by an experts' group, each country may develop its own codes and regulations.

3. The ECA proposal was endorsed 3/ by the Council of Ministers who recommended that the illustrative framework of the model codes and regulations formulated by ECA in the document should be accepted as a practical basis for each country to design its new national building code and regulations and priorities; each government should set up a specific nodal machinery to review existing acts, codes and regulations pertaining to building and construction, identify the changes required and uptodate them periodically with government approval.

1/ Egypt, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, United Republic of Cameroon and United Republic of Tanzania.

2/ ECA/MULPOC/LUSAKA/VI/3 f.

3/ Docuemnt ECA/MULPOC/LUSAKA/VI/13.

4. ECA was also requested to prepare a model code and regulations, suggest modelling for their effective administration, submit the proposals to an Expert Group meeting for in-depth study and make recommendations for adoption by governments.

5. The framework of project actions envisaged by ECA for the implementation of the MULPOC decision is as follows:

Phase I

(a) Preparation of a model of codes and regulations with due regard to the commonality of the needs and conditions of a group of countries; and outlining the structure and functions of a suitable national machinery for their administration.

(b) Convening an expert group meeting of the countries concerned to finalize the proposals for the decision of the governments.

(c) Preparation of final documents on above including the modalities of implementation of the new codes and regulations and circulation to the governments.

Phase II

(d) Technical assistance by ECA to governments, on request, in the initial stages of adoption of the agreed codes and regulations and the enforcement machinery.

(e) Technical assistance in monitoring the experience of the countries in the administration of the new codes and regulations, determining the scope for improvements and disseminating the information to all governments for appropriate follow-up actions.

(f) Preparation and submission of a composite proposal to the Joint Inter-governmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment for evolving a unified regional approach and harmonization of activities.

6. It is envisaged that Phase I and Phase II would involve 3 man-months and 6 man-months respectively, costing around US dollars 32,000 (inclusive of the cost of convening one Expert Group meeting) and 40,000 respectively.

7. It had been envisaged further that the activities would be carried out as part of the UNDP-financed ECA-executed Building Materials and Construction industries development programme subject to its being continued. Unfortunately, this is not now possible in view of the decision taken by UNDP to terminate its funding for the programme from April 1984. The UNDP funds available until that date have already been committed for carrying out other project activities decided much earlier.

8. ECA has no other extra budgetary resources for continuing the programme beyond April 1984. The experts project staff will accordingly be dismantled on this date.

9. The possibilities of raising the required funds from within the regular budgetary resources of ECA for carrying out the above the specific activities on building codes and regulations arising from the decision of the Lusaka MULPOC have been explored and there are no prospects of availability of funds for this purpose.

10. The problem of resource constraints for implementation of Human Settlements activities was also considered recently by the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment which met in Addis Ababa from 16-20 January 1984. The Committee, in a resolution, has requested member States to support the ECA through greater political and organizational commitment and active involvement in implementation.

11. In the circumstances, ECA is obliged to report above position to the Council of Ministers of Lusaka-MULPOC for a decision. One of the suggestions for consideration is that the MULPOC member States may collectively sponsor the proposed project activities by a special pledging of funds or alternatively an individual member State may sponsor it as a national project, committing necessary funds.